

TOWARDS EARLIER DIAGNOSIS: A Family Doctor's Approach. By Keith Hodgkin, B.M., B.Ch. (Oxon), M.R.C.P. (Lond.). Second Edition. (Pp. xii + 459; figs. 39. 30s). Edinburgh & London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1963.

THE fact that a second edition of Dr. Keith Hodgkin's book "Towards Earlier Diagnosis" has had to be published only three years after the first edition is a striking testimony to its worth.

Vocational training for general practice is one aspect of post-graduate medical education which is exercising the minds of many doctors today. This book, which consists chiefly of concise and systematic records from Dr. Hodgkin's general practice in Redcar, is surely one which should be compulsory reading for every doctor undergoing vocational training.

The early chapters of the book deal with the technique of diagnosis in general practice, clinical pointers to diagnosis and the emotional reactions of patients. These chapters bear the authentic stamp of personal experience and should be equally valuable to established as well as to recently-qualified doctors. J.McK.

ADVANCES IN OXYTOCIN RESEARCH. Edited by J. H. M. Pinkerton. (Pp. xi+150; illustrated. 63s). Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1965.

THIS book consists of the papers presented at a one-day symposium held by the Blair Bell Research Society. The discussions arising from these papers are also included.

The morning session was devoted to physiological and pharmacological considerations, the principal speakers describing animal studies of the circulatory effects of oxytocin and oxytocin activity in relation to such factors as suckling and milking, parturition and experimental vaginal distension. Although such studies go some way to providing possible physiological explanations for some of the apparent actions of oxytocin in the pregnant woman the difficulties of designing appropriate animal experiments and of interpreting results in terms of human physiology are made very clear.

Clinical applications were considered in the afternoon session. The report of Dr. Masheter (Parke, Davis & Co.) on clinical trials of transbuccal oxytocin in the induction of labour provided the main interest. Although the results confirm the relative efficacy of the method, his claim that it was also safe was challenged by some of the discussants. The other main papers dealt with the endocrine control of labour and with techniques for testing oxytocin sensitivity.

In addition to general medical libraries, departmental obstetric and physiological libraries will find this a useful reference book. C.R.W.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF HABITUATION. By E. M. Glaser, M.C., M.D., Ph.D., M.R.C.P. (Pp. ix+102; figs. 19. 15s). London: Oxford University Press. 1966.

THE author does not express surprise that this is the first work of its size on the topic of "habituation". By definition, habituation eliminates notice of itself. It is the process by which stored information about earlier stimuli can modify responses to subsequent stimuli. The phenomenon can be seen in animals—for example, hares show an inhibition of response to aircraft noise when they sit quite undisturbed beside a runway.

A fresh stimulus can abolish habituation. Anxiety arising in an experimental situation can result in an increase in magnitude of the response. Similarly, in the world of commerce, a new and distinctive wrapping on a product may abolish habituation and increase sales.

This short book was inspired by the author's studies of acclimatisation in the tropics. He reports some interesting experiments, but it is the reviewer's opinion that had a term such as "adaptation" been used for the phenomenon described it would have been more readily understood. The book will be of more interest to those in special fields, such as Physiology, Psychology and Pharmacology. J.G.G.